

## Exporting Toys to France

The global toy market is an \$87.4 billion industry and it continues to grow by an average rate of 2.8% each year. From just 2014 to 2015, the industry saw a 4% jump in growth.

While the toy industry itself is strong and growing, the industry in France shows a similar, if not stronger, version of the same trend. France, specifically, has an important role in the toy industry. According to the French Federation of Toy and Child Care Industries, *Fédération française des industries Jouet - Puériculture*, France is the leading country for toy consumption in Europe. Most of these toys are also imported. In 2016 French toy imports amounted to \$2.53 billion, a figure that increased 4.7% from year prior.

### EU Regulations

Given France's position as part of the European Union, U.S. toy producers looking to import products must be mindful of specificities in industry regulations. Regulations set by the European Commission are "among the strictest in the world, especially in relation to the use of chemicals in toys."

Toy safety is governed under the comprehensive [Toy Safety Directive 2009/48/EC](#).

Specificities for U.S. importers include:

- Necessity to indicate on the toy the name and address at which the U.S. company can be contacted
- Essential safety requirements regarding physical and mechanical properties—including flammability, chemical properties, electrical properties, hygiene, and radioactivity.
- A CE marking, indicating that the toy has satisfied the EU conformity assessment.

Responsibility for regulations differ by party. The conformity assessment, for example, is the responsibility of manufacturers only. Importers and distributors have their own respective responsibilities. European Commission's guide to "[Placing toys on the EU market](#)" summarizes steps for each party.

### U.S. Entry into the French Market

Toy pricing and distribution network are key decisions for U.S. companies to consider. France spends \$358 on average each year, per child. However, both the United Kingdom and the U.S. spend more. The amount spent in the U.S. per child is \$371.

While toy consumption in France is strong, French consumers are willing to spend less on toys than the U.S. market. The average price per toy in 2016 in France was 15.2 euros (approximately \$18). Additionally, the average price decreased 1.3% from the year prior, in 2015.

These price differences are an essential consideration to gauge if U.S. toys will be well received by the French market.

When it comes to distribution method of toys in France, specialized toy distributors constitute most of the distribution chain, followed by hypermarkets and supermarkets, then internet pure players. While e-commerce sales compromise the smallest part of distribution, it is also a sector that is expanding quickly – increasing 15% from 2015.

France imports most of its toys. Though importation in France is already dominated by two large players (China and other EU countries), the similarity in U.S.-EU toy regulations would make U.S. importation to France relatively smooth.